

# **Virginia Land Conservation Foundation**

## **2021 Special Pre-Proposal Grant Manual**

**Adoption Date: *October 27, 2021***

**Administered by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation**

## **I. PRE-PROPOSAL GRANT ROUND OVERVIEW**

**Chapter 539 of the 2019 Virginia Acts of Assembly** set out a new process for conducting land conservation grant rounds offered by the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation (the Foundation or VLCF) established in 1999 under Va. Code §§ 10.1-1017 through 10.1-1026.

This Pre-proposal Grant Round is being conducted to generate a ranked list of potential land conservation projects to be provided by the Chairman of the Board of Trustees to the Chairmen of the House Committee on Appropriations and the Senate Committee on Finance by December 15, 2021.

This Pre-proposal Grant Manual and the process described herein is intended to solicit land conservation project proposals, which will be scored and ranked by category, and will form the requisite project rankings list to be reported to the General Assembly.

Should grant funding be provided in the state budget for fiscal year 2023, then the VLCF Board will hold a full grant round to award those funds during calendar year 2022. The request for proposals will be open to all eligible applicants, including those who submit pre-proposals for this process and those who did not.

## **II. SUBMITTING POTENTIAL PROJECTS**

Applicants are requested to submit potential land conservation projects for consideration by submitting the Pre-proposal Information Packet and requested information as described below.

### **Pre-proposal Information Packet**

The following items make up the Pre-proposal Information Packet. *Only these listed items* should be submitted.

- 1) The **Pre-proposal Information Form** and requested information (found beginning on page 6)
- 2) An **aerial map** depicting the boundaries of the proposed project
- 3) A USGS 7.5' **topographic map** showing the boundaries of the proposed project and any perennial streams or rivers as depicted by a solid blue line
- 4) Pictures of the property, including photographs of the primary conservation values and resources to be protected

### **Pre-proposal Submission and Deadline**

A valid pre-proposal submission includes a searchable **electronic version of the entire Pre-proposal Information Packet** (in searchable PDF format). This must be delivered to the Department of Conservation and Recreation **no later than 4 p.m. on Monday, November 29, 2021.** Please email the PDF to [larry.mikkelson@dcv.virginia.gov](mailto:larry.mikkelson@dcv.virginia.gov) before the deadline.

**NOTICE: If Larry Mikkelson does not respond confirming receipt of your Pre-proposal and confirm that your materials have been processed, then you should follow-up with him by email.**

**General Inquiry:** contact DCR, Office of Land Conservation, (804) 371-5218 or (804) 337-0046.

### **Program Information**

- Pre-proposals may be submitted by state agencies, localities, other public bodies, and registered (tax-exempt) nonprofit organizations that qualify as a holder under Va. Code § 10.1-1009. Projects may be either acquisitions of property in fee simple or conservation or open-space easements.
- Pre-proposals must be for land conservation projects whereby the landowner has already been engaged and for which specific properties (tax parcels) are being sought for acquisition or conservation or open-space easements.
- Proposals must be for a minimum of \$20,000 in total expense or a possible grant request of no less than \$10,000.

- When preparing a pre-proposal the following should be considered:
  - ◆ VLCF can fund the purchase of property in fee, or the purchase of a conservation easement to protect the property's conservation values.
  - ◆ VLCF can pay up to 50% of costs associated with the project (100% for state agencies).
  - ◆ The pre-proposal must be for **specific property** and clearly identified in the proposal.
  - ◆ VLCF requires protection of water quality and other conservation values, including: at least 35' wide permanent vegetated buffers, which may be mowed up to three times per year and exclude livestock, along all perennial streams, rivers, shorelines, or bodies of water with perennial outflow. Agricultural conservation plans and forest management plans and implementation of these plans are also required, as are limitations on placement of utilities.
  - ◆ Properties in a proposal submitted by a non-profit entity must be protected by an easement held or co-held by a public body.
  - ◆ If match property is being considered rather than a cash match, the property must be geographically or ecologically connected to the subject property.

### **Pre-proposal Scoring Categories**

Pre-proposals may be submitted under one of the five following scoring categories.

1. Farmlands Preservation
2. Forest Preservation
3. Historic Area Preservation
4. Natural Area Preservation
5. Open Spaces and Parks

As set out in Va. Code § 10.1-1020 (C)(2), farmlands and forest preservation share a funding category if less than \$10 million is appropriated for a regular VLCF grant round. While this is usually a single funding category, separate criteria have been developed for agricultural lands and for forestal lands. The applicant should use the set of criteria that is most appropriate for the project being submitted.

### **Pre-proposal Review and Scoring**

Pre-proposals will be reviewed and evaluated under the chosen category indicated on the application. The scores in this process are predominantly based on mapped data and information available on the Department of Conservation and Recreation's Natural Heritage Data Explorer: <https://vanhde.org/>. This site includes the publicly accessible ConserveVirginia Map and other useful conservation planning maps. Other project information will also be considered as specified under each category.

Please be sure to answer all of the questions in the Pre-proposal Information Form for your chosen category **and the additional Water Quality Points on page 7.**

Scoring for each category is based on the criteria below. The maximum score for a project is 90 points (60 points for the chosen category plus 30 additional points for water quality criteria). Project boundaries submitted by applicants will be reviewed using maps of conservation priority resources to score the applications.

**Farmlands Preservation (60 points max)**

- ConserveVirginia: Agriculture and Forestry Category [20 points]
- Soil Productivity: Percent of soils classified as Prime, Unique and Important multiplied by 25 [up to 25 points]
- Adjacent to Conserved Lands [5 points]
- Best Management Practices: Are BMPs being implemented on the subject property [10 points]

**Forest Preservation (60 points max)**

- ConserveVirginia: Agriculture and Forestry Category [20 points]
- Acreage of property: (Acres/1000) x 8 [up to 10 points]
- Acres of forestland on the property: (Acres of forestland/1000) x 15 [up to 15 points]
- Linear feet of streams (intermittent and perennial) and rivers on the property: (Linear feet/1,000) [up to 10 points]
- Adjacent to Conserved Land [5 points]

**Historic Area Preservation (60 points max)**

- ConserveVirginia: Cultural and Historic Preservation Category [20 points]
- Historic Significance: Listed or determined by DHR to be eligible for listing on the Virginia Landmarks Register; OR a battlefield property with a priority rating in one of the following National Park Service's American Battlefield Protection Program reports: "Report on the Nation's Civil War Battlefields" (1993, as amended), or "Report to Congress on the Historic Preservation of Revolutionary War and War of 1812 Sites in the United States," (2007, as amended) [25 points]
- Underrepresented Communities & Resources: Property contains documented resources representing Virginia's culturally diverse history, such as places or sites associated with people of color (circa 1619-Civil War), the Reconstruction Era (1861-1898), the Civil Rights Movement, LGBTQ, African-American, Asian-American, Latino, Hispanic, Native American and women's history; or the site has special community significance related to its history regardless of formal documentation [10 points]
- Adjacent to Conserved Lands [5 points]

**Natural Area Preservation (60 points max)**

- ConserveVirginia: Natural Habitat & Ecosystem Diversity Category [20 points]
- Biodiversity Significance: Within a Natural Heritage Conservation Site (20 points); Natural Heritage elements present (e.g. rare plant or animal species populations, exemplary natural communities, or unique geologic features) (10 points); Biodiversity rank of Conservation Site indicating global significance (5 points) [up to 35 points]
- Adjacent to Conserved Lands/Connectivity: Is the parcel adjacent to other conservation lands with Biodiversity Management Intent (BMI)? [5 points]

**Open Spaces and Parks (60 points max)**

- ConserveVirginia: Any category of ConserveVirginia and daily public access [20 points]
- Public Access to State Waters [10 points]
- A new public recreational opportunity [10 points]
- Scenic Resources Identified and Protected [5 points]
- Benefitting an underserved population [10 points]
- Adjacent to Parks and Conserved Lands [5 points]

**Additional Water Quality Points for all Categories (30 points max)**

- Is the project within the Floodplains and Floodplain Resilience Category or the Water Quality Improvement Category of ConserveVirginia? [10 points]
- Are there perennial streams, rivers, shoreline, or bodies of water on the property that will have permanent vegetated buffers excluding livestock that are 100 feet in width? [10 points]
- Will the permanent vegetated buffers be forested? [10 points]

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Virginia Land Conservation Foundation Grant Program  
Office of the Secretary of Natural Resources  
**Pre-proposal Information Form 2021**

Entity submitting the proposal: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Entity: ☐ Locality ☐ State Agency ☐ Nonprofit

Project Name: \_\_\_\_\_

(Note: do not use landowner's name without their permission as project names will be published)

Street address of the property (No P.O. Boxes): \_\_\_\_\_

Tax Parcel Number(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Project Specifics: (*click to place an X in the box*)

☐ Fee-simple acquisition ☐ Conservation easement ☐ Other (*describe briefly here*):

Total acres to be protected: \_\_\_\_\_ Project location (county/city): \_\_\_\_\_

Virginia House District #: \_\_\_\_\_ Virginia Senate District #: \_\_\_\_\_ Congressional District #: \_\_\_\_\_

Scoring Category: (*choose only one*)

☐ Farmlands ☐ Forestlands ☐ Historic Areas ☐ Natural Areas ☐ Open Spaces & Parks

Total Project Cost (\$\$): \_\_\_\_\_ Total VLCF Grant Request (\$\$): \_\_\_\_\_

Brief Project Description (no more than 200 words)

**For Farmlands Preservation**

- Is the project in the Agriculture and Forestry Category of ConserveVirginia? \_\_\_\_\_
- What percentage of soils are classified as Prime, Unique and Important? \_\_\_\_\_
- Are BMPs being implemented on the subject property? \_\_\_\_\_
- Is the property adjacent to other conserved lands? \_\_\_\_\_

**For Forest Preservation**

- Is the project in the Agriculture and Forestry Category of ConserveVirginia? \_\_\_\_\_
- What is the acreage of the property? \_\_\_\_\_
- How many acres of forestland are on the property? \_\_\_\_\_
- How many feet of streams (intermittent and perennial) and rivers are on the property? \_\_\_\_\_
- Is the property adjacent to other conserved lands? \_\_\_\_\_

**For Historic Area Preservation**

- Is the project in the Cultural and Historic Preservation Category of ConserveVirginia? \_\_\_\_\_
- Is the property listed on the Virginia Landmarks Register? \_\_\_\_\_ If not, has DHR's Virginia State Review Board formally determined the property to be eligible to be listed on the VLR? \_\_\_\_\_
- Is the property a battlefield property identified with a priority rating by the National Park Service's American Battlefield Protection Program? \_\_\_\_\_
- Does the property contain resources representing Virginia's culturally diverse history or have special community significance related to its history? \_\_\_\_\_
- Is the property adjacent to other conserved lands? \_\_\_\_\_

**For Natural Area Preservation**

- Is the project in the Natural Habitat & Ecosystem Diversity Category of ConserveVirginia? \_\_\_\_\_
- Is the project located within a conservation site? \_\_\_\_\_
- Are there heritage elements present on the property? \_\_\_\_\_
- Does the project have global significance? \_\_\_\_\_
- What is the biodiversity rank of the conservation site? \_\_\_\_\_
- Is the parcel adjacent to conserved lands with Biodiversity Management Intent (BMI)? \_\_\_\_\_

**For Open Spaces and Parks**

- Is the project in any category of ConserveVirginia? \_\_\_\_\_
- Does the project provide daily public access? \_\_\_\_\_
- Does the project provide public access to state waters? \_\_\_\_\_
- Does the project create a new outdoor recreational opportunity? \_\_\_\_\_
- Does the project identify scenic resources and protect those scenic resources? \_\_\_\_\_
- Does the project provide a recreational resource to an underserved population according to the VIMS Social Vulnerability Index or other similar model? \_\_\_\_\_
- Is the property adjacent to another park or other conserved lands? \_\_\_\_\_

**\*\*\* Additional Water Quality Points for All Categories \*\*\***

- Is the project in the Floodplains and Floodplain Resilience Category or the Water Quality Improvement Category of ConserveVirginia? \_\_\_\_\_
- Are there perennial streams, rivers, shoreline, or bodies of water on the property that will have permanent vegetated buffers that exclude livestock and are 100 feet in width? \_\_\_\_\_
- Will the permanent vegetated buffers be forested? \_\_\_\_\_